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U.S. Denials Broadened Concerning Pueblo Crisis

By LEWIS GULICK

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government broadened its denial of spy-boat intrusions into North Korean waters by saying Friday that no U.S. intelligence vessel ever was ordered inside Korea's claimed 12-mile limit.

"So far as we know there has never been an intrusion—certainly it has never been authorized," a State Department spokesman said in response to the latest North Korean allegations.

The lengthening U.S.-North Korean dispute over the Jan. 23 seizure of the USS Pueblo revolves around where the intelligence-gathering ship was when captured.

The United States says it was operating legally in international waters when taken.

North Korea contends it was inside the 12-mile boundary and had penetrated Korean waters repeatedly prior to its capture. Pyongyang demands that the United States concede this and apologize as the price of freedom for the 82 surviving crewmen.

The Pueblo's skipper, Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher, was quoted by the North Korean news agency Friday as telling a news conference that the Pueblo's sister ship, the USS Banner, has spied on Communist countries including Russia, North Korea and Red China and that a similar U.S. electronic surveillance craft, the Palm Beach, plied the Atlantic.

And according to a February 1966 document captured by the Koreans aboard the Pueblo, U.S. intelligence ships are authorized to sail within three miles of North Korea and of the Chinese islands off Vietnam.

—A State Department spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey, said:

—The February 1966 document was a general instruction for naval intelligence operations which always was superseded by specific sailing orders for particular missions.

—The Pueblo, embarking on its maiden spy trip last January, had specific instructions dated Jan. 5 to stay at least 13 miles off the North Korean coast and the Banner got similar orders covering its voyage in that area in May 1967.

—The Palm Beach never has operated in Asian waters.

—There is nothing new to report from the 20 U.S.-North Korean sessions held so far about freeing the Pueblo and its men.

—The United States, still pressing for a diplomatic solution, has asked for still another meeting at the Panmunjom truce site and expects one soon.